

William Ashton, Jr. House
368 Benefit Street
Providence, Rhode Island
Providence County

HABS No. 26

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PHOTOGRAPHS

*WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF DRAWINGS*

Historic American Buildings Survey
Philip D. Creer, District Officer
14 College Street, Providence, R. I.

WILLIAM ASHTON, JR., HOUSE

An Addendum to
William Ashton, Jr., House
368 Benefit Street
Providence, Rhode Island
in HABS Catalog Supplement (1959)

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Address: 368 Benefit Street, Providence, Providence County,
Rhode Island. Lot 101, Plat 16. 196 Benefit
Street in 1824, 300 Benefit Street in 1847, 372
Benefit Street in 1866.

Present Owner
and Occupant: Elizabeth J. Easton.

Present Use: Dwelling.

Brief Statement
of Significance: This is an example of a medium-sized frame house of
about 1800. It is typical of Providence in its
plan and exterior detail, except for the center
window on the second floor. The interior detail is
exceptionally elegant.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1764 William Ashton died and devised to his son William Ashton his
DWELLING HOUSE and lot he purchased of William Hopkins---Wills
Book 5, page 391, in Providence City Hall.
- 1798 Chace Notes: William Ashton--E on Benefit Street; N 100' partly
on Daniel Olney and partly on Jno Sabin and Williams Thayer--
taxed for \$1,000 (U. S. Census 1798)---[Notes at the Rhode Island
Historical Society gathered by Henry R. Chace in preparation of
his book, Owners and Occupants of the Lots, Houses and Shops in
the Town of Providence, Rhode Island in 1798, Located on Maps
of the Highways of that Date (Providence, 1914)]
- 1807 Fire Record: William Ashton--self-occupied--W side of Benefit
Street 38' x 30'--wood--2 stories high--1 chimney.---Mss. fire
insurance records of the Providence Mutual Insurance Co. at the
offices of the Providence Washington Insurance Co., Providence,
R. I., Volume 1, Policy #340.
- 1810 Son, William Ashton devised his estate to wife Eunice, but
devised part of his estate with House to William Ashton Jr,
his son.---Wills Book 12, page 179, in Providence City Hall.

- 1846 William Ashton Jr. died intestate, leaving five children. Three died early leaving William H. Ashton and Caroline F. Ashton. Caroline Ashton had an illegitimate child, Edward A. Ashton who was adopted by her brother William H. Ashton. Caroline married Nathaniel Oxx.
- 1883 William H. Ashton died intestate--his sole heir at law was Caroline Oxx.
- 1890 Caroline Oxx willed the Estate to her nephew, Edward A. Ashton---Wills Book 33, page 445, in Providence City Hall.
- 1894 Edward A. Ashton sells the property to Alexander A. Walter and John Farrell--"known as the Ashton Homestead Estate"---Deed Book 394, page 101, in Providence City Hall.

The property changed ownership several times and was taxed to the following persons in the year designated:

- | | | | |
|------|--------------------|------|---------------------------------|
| 1902 | Frank Alexander | 1911 | Charles R. Easton |
| 1903 | Edward W. Williams | 1953 | Ind. Tr. Co. Trustee u/t agree- |
| 1904 | John O'Connor | | ment with C. R. Easton |
| 1909 | Arnold W. Essex | 1959 | Elizabeth J. Easton |

B. Date of erection: The house is similar to others in the area built in the 1790's, and the house mentioned in the 1764 deed must be a different one. The house was apparently not standing at the time of the Federal tax of 1798, but was probably built very soon after, perhaps a few years before the fire insurance record of 1807.

C. Sources of information: Antoinette F. Downing, Early Homes of Rhode Island (Richmond, Virginia: Garrett and Massie, 1937). Interior view, p. 307. See p. 337 for a window on the Parker Borden House in Bristol, similar to the center, second-floor window of the Ashton house.

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Gowdey
for the Providence Preservation Society
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